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News Releases and other News Material

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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

Remarks-

Release No. 0756.93

REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

**Remarks Prepared for Delivery
to USDA Employees
by
Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy
September 7, 1993**

Introduction

Thank you for coming out this afternoon. I also want to welcome employees across the country who are watching by satellite.

I want to extend greetings from the President and Vice-President who this morning announced their reinventing government initiative. I'm here to talk about how we want to reinvent USDA.

Today, we must take our place in history - and I want to make no mistake about it - history is being made today. We the people of USDA are going to be the first in the ranks of a new kind of government that is vastly different from the old order. This is not just another President and another Secretary of Agriculture making promises.

Etched in the marble on the building behind us are the words of another President committed to change - Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's vision of service created the Department of Agriculture over 130 years ago.

His quote, permanently etched on our building - reads "No other human occupation opens so wide a field for the profitable and agreeable combination of labor with cultivated thought as Agriculture."

Lincoln's words are as true today as they were when they were first uttered.

Ours is a very wide field. Our missions include production agriculture, but also the health and nutrition of our people, the safety of our food supply, the care and nurturing of our environment, the quality of life in rural communities, and research, education, and economics.

Because we are such an integral part American life - Lincoln referred to USDA as "the peoples" department."

So as I see it, my first duty is to the people of this country - and I and the President and Vice-President have committed to them better service at less cost. My next duty is to you, the people of USDA. After all, you are the ones who will be most affected by the changes we are proposing. At the same time, you are the people upon whom our success depends.

The People's Department

As Abraham Lincoln said, this is supposed to be the peoples' Department. And we have to return it to the people. That means making some decisions about what we really need, and what we don't need.

In the peoples department, we don't need 43 separate agencies and staff offices when thirty can do the job as well and save us over \$1 billion in five years.

In the peoples' department, we don't need to spend \$500,000 on a yearbook that nobody reads.

In the peoples' department, we don't need to spend \$35 million a year in awards and bonuses - at a time when tax payers are being asked to pay more for less in service.

In the peoples' department, we don't need to spend \$20 million a year on administrative costs, by having 17 separate offices performing the same functions - just for the sake of being separate.

In the people's department, we don't need entire county ASCS office which serves on 15 farmers.

Ridicule

Those are just a few reasons why this Department - the peoples' department - is the object of so much ridicule - almost on a daily basis.

Those are just a few reasons why USDA has become the Rodney Dangerfield of the government - in the minds of many, no matter what we do, we can't get any respect.

When the public thinks of a department that represents everything that's wrong with government, it is us - USDA. When the press wants to find an example of a bureaucracy out of control - it is us - USDA.

Ross Perot keeps asking why we have this Department of Agriculture, with this huge \$62 billion budget, when only 2% of the people are farmers.

Well, as usual, there is a lot that Ross Perot doesn't know. And I'm going to educate him today.

But if we are honest with ourselves - we have to admit that - Ross Perot aside -much of the criticism we have received is correct.

Imperative for change

So we have to change. The people whom we serve have lost faith in our ability to get the job done.

They believe that we are wasteful. They believe that we are bogged down in too much red tape. They believe we have too many people doing too many things that don't make good sense - and they think we do it too many times.

The people are demanding a government that works better and costs less.

Employee input

And those of you who work at USDA, and employees at other agencies, are demanding change as well.

Over the past few weeks, our own internal National Performance Review Team has been getting input from employees throughout the Department. That team, headed by Dr. Alma Hobbs, is here today - and I want to acknowledge their presence.

They will make their recommendations on how to reinvent the Department in the next few weeks. They will propose that we streamline unnecessary rules and regulations that we oftentimes impose on ourselves. They will make recommendations on how to improve our human resources management system. They will make recommendations on how to empower you to get your jobs done.

Over 8,000 USDA employees responded to the internal questionnaire that our team prepared. Hundreds more of you phoned in and wrote letters, and participated in various forums and focus groups.

You shared your ideas on restructuring. You commented on moving us from a loosely connected collection of 43 separate agencies into a real TEAM USDA.

You shared your suggestions on moving us from 43 separate agencies, that can't communicate with each other electronically, and oftentimes won't communicate with each other verbally, into a real TEAM USDA.

Many of your ideas and suggestions are included in our plans to restructure the Department.

Retreat

Deputy Secretary Rominger, who also deserves tremendous credit for bringing us to this point, and our entire subcabinet met extensively with the administrators and key staff from the 43 offices and agencies.

After we received your suggestions, the subcabinet and I spent some time in Annapolis.

We discussed how to streamline this department. We talked about how to define and focus its missions. And we debated how to best deploy our resources so we can best serve the taxpayers who are our customers.

Restructuring details

We believe this restructuring plan will help move this department from being the object of ridicule, to being the object of praise.

We have organized around six basic missions. We will consolidate many administrative functions. At the headquarters level, here in Washington, we will move from 43 agencies and staff offices down to 30.

Administrative services will be consolidated to reduce 14 separate support staffs into six administrative units.

At the field level, through collocation and office closings, we plan to reduce the number of field offices from 3,700 to 2485.

We envision a streamlined USDA - organized to perform the six primary missions of this department.

1) Improve service to farmers

Everyone knows about our mission to serve agriculture, to improve farm income.

We will do this by creating three agencies under the leadership of the Under Secretary for Farm and International Trade Services.

This plan will simplify and improve our service to farmers by creating a new single agency, the Farm Service Agency.

The new FSA will provide commodity price and income support, farm loans, and crop insurance.

We want to provide our farmers with one stop shopping. Merged into the Farm Service Agency will be the ASCS, the farmer programs currently under FmHa, and the FCIC.

To better help our farmers capture their share of the world market - we will combine the FAS and OICD into a new International Trade Service Agency.

Lastly, the National Appeals Division will combine appeals divisions of the FmHa and ASCS.

2) Make rural development a priority

The second mission of this Department is to promote rural development. I don't have to tell you how important rural America is to America. We have a mission to improve the quality of life in rural America, and by focusing our resources we do it.

We envision three agencies under the Under Secretary for Rural Economic and Community Development.

The Rural Utilities Service will combine the telephone and electric programs of REA and the water and sewer programs of the RDA.

The Rural Community Development Service will combine FmHa rural housing programs and RDA and REA rural community loan programs.

And the new Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service will include the business development programs that are now at RDA, REA, the Agricultural Cooperative Service and the Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercialization Center.

3) Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services

This Department's third mission is to feed those in our country who need help. And we all know that 1 of every 10 people rely on the food stamps that we provide. Our mission is to ensure that 24 million school children receive a healthy lunch.

When people talk about the \$62 billion budget of the Department of Agriculture, and wonder why we spend so much money when there are fewer farmers - they need to understand that 54% of our budget is spent on these food and nutrition programs.

By elevating this mission, and making the current Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services the Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, we will enhance the public's knowledge of what we are about at USDA.

We will create a Food and Consumer Service by combining the FNS with the Office of Consumer Advisor. Secondly, the renamed Nutrition Research and Education Service will focus our goal of merging nutritional education with our food delivery programs.

4) Emphasis on Conservation Programs

Our fourth mission is conservation. Again, people think USDA and they think farmers. That's important. But 3 of every ten employees we have work for the Forest Service - preserving and conserving our natural resources.

Through the national forests we manage, USDA is the largest providers of recreation in this country. How many people know that?

There will be two agencies under the Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.

A new Natural Resources and Conservation Service will be established by combining the SCS and the ASCS conservation cost share programs.

The Forest Service, for now, will stay the same.

5) Ensuring Food Quality and Safety

Our fifth mission is to ensure the quality and safety of food.

We think we can fulfill this mission with our current structure - even though we have already significantly moved to change the way we inspect and regulate to maintain and heighten the safety and quality of our food supply.

6) Research and Economics

The sixth and final programmatic mission of this Department is to perform the research, the economic analysis, and enhance the education that is vital to farmers and rural America.

USDA has traditionally been committed to strong research and education programs.

We will enhance them by creating three agencies under the Assistant Secretary for Research and Economics.

First, the Agricultural Research and Education Service will combine the present Agricultural Research Service, the Extension Service, the Cooperative State Research Service, and the National Agricultural Library.

Second, the new Agricultural Economics Service combines the Economics Research Service and the Office of Energy.

Lastly, the National Agricultural Statistics Service and the Economics Management Staff will also report to the Assistant Secretary for Research and Economics.

Those are the six programmatic missions, and the structure that we believe organizes us best to serve our customers and accomplish those missions.

Administrative services/ support services

The support functions will also be enhanced.

We now have a Chief Financial Officer to direct the financial management of the Department - and get us on the same page there.

And there will be a Chief Economist to advise the Secretary on economic issues important to our missions.

We will have a new Assistant Secretary for Communications - and the new Office of Communications will play a stronger role in delivering information to all of our customers - internal as well as external.

We have already made several changes under the Assistant Secretary for Administration - creating a new office of Civil Rights Enforcement from the old Office of Advocacy and Enterprise, demonstrating my commitment to ensuring equal opportunity and improving civil rights in this department.

When we say the peoples' department, we mean all of the people. And the peoples' department would not have to spend the \$16 million we spend now processing EEO complaints, which come in at a rate of 55 each month, from employees who believe they have been discriminated against.

We can do better than that.

Cost savings

All of these changes represent real cost savings for the tax payers who pay our bills.

Through these headquarters and field restructuring, we can save \$ 2.3 billion over the next five years - and we believe improve the service we deliver.

We can save \$20 million annually by consolidating administrative staffs.

We can save \$69 million by eliminating unnecessary office space.

We can save \$10 million by just more efficiently managing our motor vehicle fleet.

These are real savings - and we owe it to the people who pay our bills to achieve them and more.

Impact on employees

And yes, we can save, and should save, by reducing the number of employees that we have now doing the same thing.

Everyone here knows that we have to reduce the number of employees throughout federal government - and at USDA.

A significant portion of the \$1.3 billion in savings has to come from staff reductions, at least 7500, over the next five years.

Clearly, when we combine agencies, and consolidate administrative functions, close field offices and collocate others, we won't need as many employees.

That's just a fact of life.

Everything we do must be held up to the light of the 21st Century. Programs, policies, and yes, people.

Work to mitigate the impact

But I will assure you this.

I am going to use every avenue that the President and Vice-President makes available to try and achieve these reductions through attrition and retirements.

I'm supportive of the early buyout options being pursued by the President.

Committed to workforce diversity

And, even though we have to downsize - or rightsize - I want you to know that I remain committed to our goals of workforce diversity.

The American people demand a government that works better and costs less-and also a government that is truly representative of our diverse population.

So our workforce diversity goals cannot suffer while we reduce the overall size of this Department.

Empower employees

When this restructuring is done, when we reinvent USDA, this will be a better place to work for all of our employees.

A key element of the National Performance Review report the Vice President released this morning - one of the four pillars on which it is based - is that we empower employees to get the job done.

We simply don't need as many people telling you what to do, or watching you do what you do.

We just need to remove some of the layers of bureaucracy. We need to change this culture which stifles initiative and punishes creativity. We need to empower our front line employees to do what you are trained to do because you know best how to do it.

As the Vice-President said this morning, we have good employees trapped in bad systems.

Conclusion

Finally, it's important for you and I to note and remember that reinventing government does not end here today when I step away from this podium and you return to your offices.

Reinventing and reorganizing the Department of Agriculture will be an ongoing process, a process within which we must continue to look for waste; where we must constantly work to improve; and most of all, within which we must constantly strive to better our services to the American public in the most efficient manner possible.

When we walk away today, we must leave with the thought of why we were here on this lawn and why it was necessary to go through this reinventing process.

The changes we announce today are not simply change for the sake of change. It is change -- mandated by the American public -- brought on by years -- decades -- of satisfaction with the status quo, of a government that has not kept pace with the hands of times.

I firmly believe if we stay vigilant and if we strive to constantly improve our mission and most important of all, if we don't lose sight of why we are here -- to serve the American people and to build a secure foundation upon which future generations can build and develop - we can create a Department that every single American will be proud of and proud to support.

Dawn of a new century

You know, the plan presented by the President and the Vice President and by me here today is a five year plan. Five years takes us right up to the precipice of a new century -- the twenty first century.

New centuries are met with excitement and hope for what the future holds and the opportunities and challenges that awaits a nation in the next 100 years.

At the dawn of the 20th century, less than 40 years after President Lincoln uttered the remarks carved above me, there were untold challenges and opportunities. Challenges that you and your predecessors met and exceeded.

Challenges like improving agricultural production, challenges and opportunities in feeding hungry children right here in America and around the world. Opportunities to light the homes of Americans who knew only darkness every time the sun set.

With this new century upon us in a mere six years let us walk away today and use this plan to reinvent government at the Department of agriculture as the basis for those challenges and opportunities for this next century.

As I end, it was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said that "human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Even a superficial look at history reveals that no social advance - and I might add parenthetically no governmental advance - rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals."

"Without persistent effort, time itself becomes an ally of the insurgent and primitive forces of irrational emotionalism and social destruction." He said, "this is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action."

So you the employees and people of USDA must choose, as I have chosen, to commit yourselves individually and collectively to the greater good of the country. And I believe strongly that we can all grow individually and together if we are willing to accept the growing pains that must come.

Like the values of caring and sharing that farm families are known for, we will meet the demands and challenges of our time.

Thank you.



News Releases-

Release No. 0749.93

Bonny Wolf (202) 720-7711

Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623

ESPY LAUNCHES FRESH START FOR SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today launched an initiative to improve school meal programs across the country, underscoring USDA's renewed emphasis on nutrition.

The long-term nutrition initiative, Fresh Start, was announced this morning by Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Food and Consumer Services Ellen Haas. Initially, Fresh Start will mean the purchase of twice the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables for schools and the department will hold a series of four field hearings to solicit public opinion on how to improve nutrition in school meal programs.

"As we start the new school year, we are reminded that school meals are an integral part of helping our students excel in school," said Espy. "Our school meal programs are the first line of

defense against poor nutrition. We must strive to reduce the amount of fat in the school meal program."

The National School Lunch Program operates in nearly 95 percent of the nation's schools and serves about 25 million lunches a day. More than 5 million children are served breakfasts at school.

"There is no longer any question that diet is related to chronic disease," said Haas, who oversees the school meal programs. "Studies indicate that children's diets do not now meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. School-age children get too many of their calories from fat and do not eat enough fruits and vegetables. Clearly, healthy eating habits are essential as preventive medicine."

The public field hearings will be:

- *Oct. 13, Atlanta
- *Oct. 27, Los Angeles
- *Nov. 12, Flint, Mich.
- *Dec. 7, Washington, D.C.

"We need to bring together as many people as we can to talk about nutrition in our schools," said Espy.

With this school year, USDA has already begun to respond to concerns about fat, fruit and vegetables in purchases made for schools. The department plans to double the number of fresh fruits and vegetables offered to schools -- a substantial increase over the 8.8 million pounds of fresh apples, pears, grapefruits, oranges, tomatoes and baking potatoes distributed last year. The variety as well as the numbers of fruits and vegetables will also increase.

Some of the other elements of Fresh Start will include:

*Reduced fat cheddar cheese will be available on a test basis in some schools this year and USDA is testing a new low-fat mozzarella cheese which has 9 percent fat versus the 22-25 percent fat of regular mozzarella.

*The U.S. Department of Agriculture also is developing a low-fat turkey sausage which will continue the department's commitment to offering lower-fat meats in schools. USDA is already offering school programs beef patties with a fat content of 10 percent, has lowered the fat content in canned pork, and has expanded the variety of poultry products to include ground turkey and turkey burgers with an average fat content of less than 11 percent.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: The graphic below is designed as camera ready copy for drop-in placement, with or without accompanying story, for use in newspapers, magazines, and newsletters.



Release No. 0752.93

Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898
Jerry Redding (202) 720-3310

USDA REQUIRES SEVEN DAY QUARANTINE FOR HORSES FROM MEXICO

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7--The U.S. Department of Agriculture is requiring a seven-day quarantine on horses imported from Mexico because of an outbreak of Venezuelan equine encephalitis (VEE) in that country.

"This requirement is a precautionary measure to protect horses in the United States from this infectious disease," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator for veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

Before horses can come into the United States from Mexico, they must be quarantined for seven days in a Mexican facility approved by APHIS. The facility must be constructed so as to prevent the entry of mosquitoes and other insects that carry the deadly disease.

Horses, mules, donkeys and other equines from Mexico being imported through USDA animal import centers in New York, Florida and California are still eligible to enter the United States after a seven-day quarantine and meeting other disease requirements.

The APHIS National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa, isolated the VEE virus on July 22 from samples submitted from horses affected by the outbreak in the southern State of Chiapas, Mexico. USDA closed the border to imports of Mexican equines the next day.

This disease is a highly infectious viral disease of equines and other animal species, including humans. It is spread primarily by mosquitoes. Most horses, mules and donkeys infected with the disease show central nervous system disorders including depression, drowsiness and lack of coordination. Signs can vary in severity and in some cases the animals may die in a few hours. There is no cure for the disease once an animal is infected; however, vaccinating horses aids in preventing spread of the virus.

Horse owners living in the border states of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas should vaccinate their horses, Johnson said.

This action was published as an interim rule in the Aug. 27 Federal Register.

Comments will be considered if sent on or before Oct. 26. Send an original and three copies of your comments to Chief, Regulatory, Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments should refer to docket number 93-096-1.

Comments received may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141 South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday except holidays. Persons wishing to review comments are encouraged to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the comment reading room.



Release No. 0753.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623
or Tom Amontree
Mary Dixon

ESPY ANNOUNCES PLAN TO REDUCE BUREAUCRACY/IMPROVE SERVICES AT USDA

(Reorganization cuts number of agencies from 43 to 30)

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today unveiled his \$2.3 billion cost-savings USDA reorganization plan and gave a charge to U.S. Department of Agriculture employees to help reduce the bureaucracy and eliminate waste and duplication.

Savings above the \$2.3 billion are expected as additional reinventing government proposals announced today are adopted by the department.

The USDA reorganization plan will cut the number of agencies from 43 to 30, eliminate 7,500 employees over five years and put into place an organization to streamline and better deliver services. Of the \$2.3 billion in savings, \$1.3 billion will be saved through staff reductions and another \$1 billion will be saved through such cost cuts for travel, office space and supplies.

"Today, we have unveiled a plan designed to crack open the bureaucratic mold, improve the delivery of service and save money," said Espy.

"The Department of Agriculture has not kept pace with the needs of its constituencies and has not been responsible to the American taxpayer. The changes we are announcing will transform the department into a farmer-friendly, taxpayer-friendly model for responsible government."

Espy, who joined President Clinton and Vice President Gore for the reinventing government announcement at The White House, later addressed USDA employees about specific changes planned for the department.

Said Espy, "President Lincoln created USDA to meet the needs of our country in the 19th Century. President Clinton is recreating the department to meet the needs of the 21st Century and beyond."

The reorganization plan includes creating a Farm Service Agency that will cut red tape for the farmer and the creation of three new rural development agencies that will eliminate duplication and overlapping functions that now plague the current organization.

The Farm Service Agency will mean one-stop shopping for the farmer by consolidating into one office the field programs that are now divided among four different agencies. The FSA will be housed in USDA Service Centers, enabling USDA employees in charge of different programs to work together in shared space and with a shared computer system. The number of field offices will be cut from 3,700 to 2,485.

In addition, red tape will be further cut for the farmer by creating the National Appeals Division, which currently is divided into two agencies; and there will be a renewed emphasis on trade by the creation of the International Trade Service, which will eliminate and streamline the functions of two current agencies, the Foreign Agricultural Service and the Office of International Cooperation and Development.

While the current rural development agencies at USDA have unclear, outdated and overlapping functions, the new organization will end duplication and place a renewed emphasis on economic development, revitalization and the creation of jobs in America's dying rural communities.

The plan calls for eliminating the Rural Electric Administration, the Rural Development Administration and the Farmers Home Administration. While the three current agencies will cease to exist, many of their needed programs and functions will be retained while duplication will be eliminated in the new structure.

The plan's rural development structure calls for the creation of the Rural Utilities Service that will include telephone/electric programs and water/sewer programs; the Rural Community Development Service that will include housing and community loan programs; and the Business Development Service that will focus on business development.

Some of the savings anticipated by the reorganization include:

- *Approximately \$43 million is expected to be saved in five years due to staff cuts in Washington alone.

- *The 7,500 staff reduction is expected to save \$400 million annually.

- *By consolidating the administrative staffs of all the agencies, \$20 million is expected to be saved.

- *The elimination of the USDA Yearbook will save \$500,000 annually.

- *By cutting the number of agencies from 43 to 30, the department is expected to save \$1 million in the first year due to a cut in agency administrators.

- *Saving \$10 million by reforming management of the motor vehicle fleet.

- *Approximately, \$1 million is expected to be saved with the elimination of unnecessary travel to conferences and meetings.

- *With reform of the department's awards ceremonies, \$200,000 is expected to be saved annually.

- *Approximately, \$69 million is expected to be saved through the elimination of unnecessary office space.

- *Approximately, \$6.2 million is expected to be saved by collecting user fees, instead of using taxpayers money, for grading programs such as grading ketchup and pickles.

- *By creating the Info Share System, a computer network that will allow computers in the field to talk to each other, \$10 million is expected to be saved by cutting down on the use of paper.

- *Currently, the USDA has an abundance of telephone outlets that are being paid for but not used. Espy has called for their immediate shut-down, saving \$2 million.

"Many of the savings are obtained through simple common sense. They are savings that are long overdue," Espy said.



Release No. 0757.93
Robert Feist (202) 720-6789
Wayne Baggett (202) 720-2065

ESPY AUTHORIZES HARVESTING HAY FROM CONSERVATION ACREAGE FOR DONATION TO DISASTER-AFFECTED PRODUCERS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8 -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today authorized producers in counties not affected by 1993 natural disasters to harvest hay from acreage conservation reserve (ACR) and conservation use (CU) acreage for donation to livestock producers in disaster-affected counties.

The hay must be donated to livestock producers or to organizations that will donate the hay to livestock producers in counties that have been approved for any of the following:

- emergency haying and grazing of ACR and CU for payment acreage;
- haying and grazing of 1993 Conservation Reserve Program acreage; or
- the livestock feed program.

The hay may be harvested by either the producer or the recipient. Before starting harvesting the hay producers need to:

- request authority from the county ASC committee;
- designate the number of acres to be hayed;
- provide the recipient or organization's name to receive the hay; and
- certify that the hay will be donated.

Producers approved for this special harvesting of hay may not receive payment, exchange of goods or benefit in any way for vegetative cover, harvesting or transportation.

Grazing under this special authority is prohibited. This special authority does not apply to acreage enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, the Integrated Farm Management Program and the Water Bank Program.

Applications to harvest hay for donation may be obtained through the producers' local ASCS county offices.



Release No. 0758.93
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SOYBEAN ROASTING FINE-TUNED FOR BETTER CATTLE FEED

WASHINGTON, Sept 9--A new "recipe" for processing whole soybeans as livestock feed could benefit both cows and soybean farmers, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists who developed the technique.

Soybeans may be heated to increase their content of "bypass protein" that resists wasteful bacterial breakdown in the cow's stomach. But current procedures can leave beans undercooked so they are no more nutritious than raw beans, or overcooked and thus destroying amino acids needed by the cow to make milk.

In 1987, scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service at Madison, Wis., began studying temperatures and cooking times to produce more bypass protein. Their recommendation, based on the new recipe: Heat the beans to 295 degrees F, then hold them at that temperature for a half hour after cooking.

In tests at the agency's U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center at Madison, the researchers cooked whole soybeans and fed the beans plus alfalfa silage and corn to more than 100 Holstein cows. Milk yields rose as much as eight pounds per cow per day compared with cows fed soybean meal, the standard protein supplement fed to cows.

"Dairy cows are producing more milk than ever, so they need a concentrated source of both protein and caloric energy," said Larry D. Satter, director of the Madison facility. "Whole soybeans provide a rich source of calories because of their oil."

Feeding roasted whole soybeans to cows provides an expanded market for soy oil. In Wisconsin alone, feeding dairy cows roasted soybeans could open a market for about 15 million bushels of soybeans annually, Satter said.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Contact for details Larry D. Satter, U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Madison, Wis. 53706. Telephone: (609) 263-2030.

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Release No. 0761.93

Billy Cox (202) 720-3329

Wayne Baggett (202) 720-2065

USDA MAKES FORMER SOVIET UNION ELIGIBLE FOR CHEESE UNDER DEIP

WASHINGTON, Sept. 9 -- Under Secretary of Agriculture Eugene Moos today announced that the Former Soviet Union is eligible for 500 metric tons of cheese under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Dairy Export Incentive Program.

Sales of cheese will be made through normal commercial channels at competitive world prices. Sales will be facilitated through the payment of bonuses of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

This cheese allocation will be valid until Dec. 31, as provided in the invitation for offers. Details of the program will be issued in the near future.

For more information call Randy Baxter, (202) 720-5540, or Larry McElvain, (202) 720-6211.

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Release No. 0763.93

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OWNERS OF TWO LOS ANGELES PRODUCE MARKETS SENTENCED IN \$20 MILLION FOOD STAMP SCAM

WASHINGTON, Sept. 9--A Los Angeles businessman has been sentenced to prison and fined for illegally redeeming millions of dollars worth of food stamps. He is the last of five people sentenced after pleading guilty to trafficking in some \$20 million worth of food stamps.

David Rodriguez, owner of David's Produce, was sentenced August 30 to 51 months in prison plus 3 years of probation after pleading guilty to trafficking charges. He was also ordered to pay \$25,000 in restitution.

Charles R. Gillum, acting inspector general for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said Rodriguez' wife and son also were sentenced recently after pleading guilty to similar charges. He said Juana Rodriguez was sentenced to 42 months in prison, 3 years of probation, and was ordered to pay \$25,000 in restitution. The couple's son, Eduardo Rodriguez, was sentenced to 18 months in prison and 3 years of probation.

Gillum said USDA has also brought a civil suit against the Rodriguezes seeking forfeiture of cash, bank accounts and real property.

In addition, Gillum said the owners of a second business were sentenced after they also entered guilty pleas to trafficking charges. Evaristo Pereira, owner of Pereira's Produce, and Maria Pereira were each sentenced to 3 years in prison and 3 years of probation, and were each ordered to pay \$150,000 in restitution. A civil forfeiture action is pending against bank accounts and real property owned by the Pereiras.

"Starting in October 1991 and continuing through 1992, the Rodriguezes redeemed \$9.5 million worth of food stamps through their store," Gillum said. "These redemptions included food stamps that they illegally purchased for cash at a fraction of their face value and redeemed at their full value."

The Pereiras redeemed \$11.3 million in food stamps from 1989 through 1992, Gillum said, also including stamps they purchased illegally for less than their face value.

"Both businesses structured cash withdrawals from their bank accounts to hide their illegal activities," Gillum said. He added that both the Pereiras and the Rodriguezes operated small businesses, but were doing a greater business in food stamps than some of the major chain grocery stores.

"This type of predatory activity on the Food Stamp Program will not be tolerated, and will be actively investigated and prosecuted," Gillum said. He said the guilty pleas in both cases stemmed from an investigation by USDA's Office of the Inspector General. USDA administers the Food Stamp Program at the federal level.

Gillum said the cases were prosecuted by U.S. Attorney Terree A. Bowers and Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven M. Arkow of the Central District of Los Angeles.



Release No. 0764.93
Joseph Yarrish (212) 264-8400
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BUSINESSMAN GETS PRISON, FINE FOR \$40 MILLION FOOD STAMP SCAM

WASHINGTON, Sept. 9--A Brooklyn, N.Y., businessman has been sentenced to charges of illegally acquiring and redeeming over \$40 million in food stamps.

Felix Puello, 44, owner of Puello Meats and Provisions, Inc. was sentenced August 26 to 21 months in prison to be followed by 3 years' probation, and was fined \$40,000.

Charles Gillum, acting inspector general for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said the case was one of the largest since the Food Stamp Program was established in 1964. USDA administers the program at the federal level.

"Puello accepted more than \$40 million in food stamps from restaurants, retail stores and other wholesalers from May, 1990 to March, 1992," Gillum said. "He redeemed the food stamps through a fictitious retail store that he established."

Gillum said Puello redeemed more than \$4.7 million worth of food stamps just in the month of January, 1992, accounting for almost 5 percent of food stamps redeemed by all stores in New York City.

Gillum said investigators from USDA's Office of the Inspector General raided Puello's store in March, 1992. He said the raid was the culmination of an investigation that began when USDA's Food and Nutrition Service received an anonymous tip that Puello was accepting food stamps from other retailers.

Puello had participated in the Food Stamp Program up until 1982, when authorization for most wholesale firms, including Puello's, were withdrawn in an effort to reduce food stamp fraud. Food stamps may only be used by eligible recipients to purchase food at authorized stores. These stores can then only redeem the food stamps at approved banks.

In October 1992, the U.S. Attorney filed a civil suit against Puello seeking treble damages and penalties totaling more than \$120 million. The suit also asks that all monies and properties traceable to Puello be seized and forfeited to the government. That suit is still pending.

Gillum said Puello provided a laundering outlet for store owners who had obtained food stamps illegally. The investigation found approximately 75 percent of Puello's customers were not authorized to accept food stamps from recipients. During three separate independent investigations, food stamps, which were discounted by OIG Special Agents for cash with traffickers at unauthorized stores, were redeemed through Puello's fictitious retail store.

This case was prosecuted by U.S. Attorney Zachary W. Carter and Assistant U.S. Attorney Beth Wilkinson, Eastern District of New York.



Program Announcements-

Releases No. 0755.93
 Gene Rosera (202) 720-6734
 Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES

WASHINGTON, Sept 7--Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Eugene Moos today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

-- long grain whole kernels:	6.80 cents per pound
-- medium grain whole kernels:	6.17 cents per pound
-- short grain whole kernels:	6.09 cents per pound
-- broken kernels:	3.40 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment (LDP) rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are:

	Loan Gain and LDP Rate	Marketing Certificate Rate
\$/Cwt.....	
-- for long grain:	\$2.03	\$0.42
-- for medium grain:	\$1.84	\$0.40
-- for short grain:	\$1.84	\$0.35

These announced prices and rates are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Sept. 14 at 3 p.m. EDT.



Release No. 0762.93
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 Carol Childers (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, Sept. 9--Dallas Smith, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price or AWP), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (leaf grade 4, micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality), and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 16. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Sept. 10, through midnight Thursday, Sept. 16.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 79 percent of the 1993 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 1.41 cents per pound. Following are the relevant calculations:

I. Calculated AWP	41.36 cents per pound
1993 Base Loan Rate	52.35 cents per pound
AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate	79

II.	USNE Price	56.40 cents per pound
	NE Price	- 54.99 cents per pound
	Maximum Adjustment Allowed	1.41 cents per pound

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

NE Price	54.99
Adjustments:	
Avg. U.S. spot market location	11.82
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.50
Avg. U.S. location	0.31
Sum of Adjustments	- 13.63
Calculated AWP	41.36
Further AWP adjustment	- 0
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	41.36 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price	54.99
NE Coarse Count Price	- 50.64
	4.35
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	- 3.20
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	1.15 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is below the 1991, 1992, and 1993 base quality loan rates of 50.77, 52.35, and 52.35 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the AWP, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is below the 1993-crop loan rate, cash loan deficiency payments (LDPs) will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo obtaining a price support loan with respect to the 1993 crop. The payment rate is equal to the difference between the loan rate and the AWP. Producers are allowed to obtain an LDP on a bale-by-bale basis.

The USNE price has not exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is 0 cents per pound. This rate is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to Sept. 30, 1994. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	Period Ending	For the		User
		USNE	NE	Certificate
		Price	Price	Payment
			cents/lb	Rate
1	Aug. 19, 1993	56.05	54.85	0
2	Aug. 26, 1993	56.45	55.19	0
3	Sept. 2, 1993	56.13	55.00	0
4	Sept. 9, 1993	56.40	54.99	0

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, Sept 16.



Release No. 0765.93
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Wayne Baggett (202) 720-2065

USDA EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD ON UPLAND COTTON USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today announced that the public comment period on the user marketing certificate program has been extended to Sept. 30.

A notice requesting comments was published in the Aug. 20 Federal Register concerning changes in the operation of the user marketing certificate program. The comment period was originally scheduled to end on Sept. 20. However, CCC has received and approved a request to extend the comment period for an additional 10 days.

Comments on the user marketing certificate program should be sent to: Director, Fibers and Rice Analysis Division, 3760-S, USDA/ASCS, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013. Comments will be available for public inspection in Room 3760-S during normal business hours.



Features-

Release No. 0750.93
Amichai Heppner (301) 436-5222
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USDA CONSIDERS ANIMAL HEALTH RISKS IN LIGHT OF NEW TRADE AGREEMENTS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7--Question: When is a border not a border?

Answer: When the country becomes a party to modern-day trade agreements. The old national borders continue, but the quarantine borders to keep out agricultural pests and diseases may change.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture already is negotiating with its trading partners on drawing quarantine lines for exotic plant pests and animal diseases that are more realistic on national borders. According to Lonnie J. King, acting administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, it's important for U.S. agricultural leaders and traders to learn more about how quarantine lines are affected by trade agreements.

"A key word in current agricultural negotiations is 'regionalization,'" King says. "The emphasis no longer is on whether an entire country is free of an exotic disease but on the locale from which exports would originate. A disease-free locale, region or zone could be smaller than the nation, could coincide with national boundaries, or could even include several countries. The critical factors to consider are climatic conditions, production practices, the veterinary infrastructure, animal density and population, and geographic barriers--like rivers and mountains."

"Regionalization could come into play, for example, if an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease occurred simultaneously in Alaska and south Florida," King says. "With the traditional approach, other countries would not import any U.S. livestock until the disease was eradicated. With regionalization, participating countries would continue to admit imports of U.S. livestock from parts of our country outside the infected areas or zones."

Each participating country in a "regionalization" agreement retains the right to determine what level of risk is acceptable. To help foreign officials decide how to assess the risk, APHIS counterparts would immediately inform them where an outbreak had occurred and what measures were being taken to clean it up.

"Regionalization and risk assessment are inextricably linked," King says. "Under risk assessment I include risk analysis, risk management, and risk communication. Responsible officials would first evaluate the likelihood of a disease outbreak if a particular import was accepted from an infected area. If a likelihood exists, the officials would determine if the level of risk was tolerable. If it was not

tolerable, they would determine whether steps could be taken to minimize the risk. Then they would communicate their decision to everyone affected."

King says he has given high priority to staying current on risk assessment. Heading APHIS's group of risk assessment specialists is Alwynelle Ahl, a veterinarian whose background includes mathematics, biology, ecology, and comparative medicine--disciplines that contribute to effective risk analysis.

Ahl likes to quote Mark Twain, who supposedly said: "I've been faced with a lot of risky situations in my time, and most of them never happened." She uses the story to explain that nowadays there are modern techniques to assess the likelihood that any "risky situation" is in fact a real risk. She can evaluate the risk presented by a specific animal health threat and then can add an indication of the confidence that can be attached to the evaluation. Having quantifiable risk analysis available during negotiations makes it easier to separate animal health concerns from politics, Ahl says. King and Ahl have both been active in explaining the new approach to farm industry groups, like the National Cattlemen's Association, as well as organizations involved in the international trade of animals, like exporters and operators of artificial insemination centers. King and Ahl have found that their audiences can recognize that regionalization helps facilitate trade without compromising safety. The process holds the potential to improve communication, increase U.S. exports, add flexibility in dealing with animal health concerns, create a level playing field among trading partners, and increase the flow of information about animal diseases.

King says negotiations already are underway that apply the regionalization concerns about bluetongue. This disease presents an unusual risk in that it causes economic damage mainly in sheep and goats, but can be transmitted by cattle. Bluetongue exists in the United States and not in Europe, making U.S. trading partners uneasy about importing American cattle.

To allay their fears, APHIS has delineated a bluetongue-free zone in the northeastern United States, and U.S. negotiators hope they can convince their counterparts in Europe that cattle from this free zone could cross the ocean without the risk of transferring bluetongue.

For some plant pest control programs, regionalization has already become an actuality. King says that, for example, APHIS plant pest specialists have worked with growers in certain municipalities in the Mexican State of Sonora to establish zones recognized as free of exotic fruit flies that damage agricultural crops. As a result, APHIS is allowing these municipalities to export apples, grapefruit, oranges, and peaches into U.S. markets. Restrictions on fruit imports from outside the pest-free zone will remain in place until Mexico can delineate additional zones that have been cleared of exotic fruit flies.



Release No. 0751.93
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SE HABLA DE REGIONALIZACION BAJO LOS NUEVOS ACUERDOS DEL COMERCIO

WASHINGTON, 7 sept.--Pregunta: ¿Cuando deja de ser frontera una frontera?

Respuesta: Cuando el país forma parte de los últimos acuerdos modernos del comercio. Cuando aún existen las fronteras nacionales, pero se han redefinido las fronteras de cuarentena para evitar el ingreso de plagas y enfermedades agrícolas.

El Servicio de Inspección de Sanidad Agropecuaria del Departamento de Agricultura de los EE.UU. (APHIS-USDA sigla en inglés) está actualmente negociando con sus socios de intercambio para adoptar fronteras de cuarentena que son más realistas que las fronteras nacionales y que toman en cuenta las plagas vegetales y las enfermedades exóticas de animales. De acuerdo a Lonnie King, administrador interino del APHIS-USDA, es importante que los líderes y los comerciantes agrícolas de los EE.UU. se informen más a fondo de la forma en que los acuerdos de intercambio afectan las fronteras de cuarentena.

"La palabra clave en negociaciones agrícolas presentes es 'regionalización', dijo King. "Ya no se pone énfasis a que todo el país tenga que estar libre de una dada enfermedad exótica, sino en la región de donde las exportaciones se van a originar. Una región o zona que está libre de enfermedad podría ser más pequeña que el país, podría coincidir con las fronteras nacionales, o también podría

prácticas de producción, infraestructura veterinaria, población y densidad animal, y barreras geográficas -como ríos y montañas.

"Se emplearía regionalización, por ejemplo, si un brote de la fiebre aftosa ocurriera simultáneamente en Alaska y en el sur de Florida," dijo King. "Con el sistema tradicional, otros países dejarían de importar ganado de los EE.UU. hasta que la enfermedad estuviera erradicada. Con la regionalización, los países participantes continuarán aceptando importaciones de ganado estadounidense provenientes de las partes del país que están fuera de las zonas infectadas".

Los países que participen en un acuerdo de "regionalización" tendrán el derecho de determinar el nivel de riesgo que les es aceptable. Para ayudar a los oficiales extranjeros a decidir como evaluar el riesgo, los contrapartes de APHIS les informarán inmediatamente acerca del lugar donde ocurrió el brote y de las medidas que se tomarán para controlarlo.

"La regionalización y la evaluación de riesgo están íntimamente ligadas", dijo King. "Bajo la categoría de evaluación de riesgo se incluyen los análisis de riesgos, y la administración y la comunicación de riesgos. Los oficiales responsables evaluarán primero cual será la probabilidad de un brote de enfermedad, si se fuera a aceptar una cierta importación de alguna área infectada. Si la probabilidad de un brote de enfermedad existiera, los oficiales determinarían si el nivel de riesgo es tolerable. Si no fuera tolerable, determinarán que medidas tomar para minimizar el riesgo. Luego comunicarán su decisión a todos los afectados".

King dijo que estar al corriente de la evaluación de riesgos es una de sus más altas prioridades. A la cabeza del grupo de especialistas de evaluación de riesgos de APHIS está la Dra. Alwynelle Ahl, una veterinaria cuya trayectoria incluye matemáticas, biología, ecología, y medicina comparativa -- disciplinas que contribuyen a un análisis efectivo de riesgo.

A Ahl le gusta hacer referencia de Mark Twain, quién dijo: "En mi vida me he visto en muchas situaciones peligrosas, y muchas de ellas nunca se hicieron realidad". Ella usa esta historia para explicar que hoy en día hay técnicas modernas para evaluar la posibilidad de cualquier "situación de riesgo" y ver si el peligro es real. Ella es capaz de evaluar el riesgo presentado por una amenaza específica de salud animal y después recomendar la confianza que se puede tener en la evaluación. El tener disponibles análisis de riesgo que son cuantificables durante negociaciones hace más fácil el separar la política de las preocupaciones de sanidad animal, dijo Ahl.

Ambos, King y Ahl, han estado activamente explicando este nuevo método a grupos de la industria agrícola, como a la Asociación Nacional de Ganaderos, así como a organizaciones involucradas en el intercambio internacional de animales, como exportadores y operadores de centros de inseminación artificial. King y Ahl, se han dado cuenta que sus audiencias pueden reconocer que regionalización ayuda a facilitar el comercio sin poner en compromiso la seguridad. Potencialmente este proceso podría mejorar la comunicación, aumentar las exportaciones de los EE.UU., añadir flexibilidad cuando se trata de asuntos de salud animal, crear un campo justo entre asociados de intercambio, y aumentar el flujo de información acerca de enfermedades animales.

King dice que ya hay negociaciones en camino que aplican a la regionalización conciente a la lengua azul. Esta enfermedad presenta un riesgo poco común porque causa un daño económico especialmente en ovejas y chivos, pero puede ser transmitido por el ganado vacuno. La lengua azul existe en los Estados Unidos y no en Europa, haciendo que los socios de intercambio europeos sientan desconfianza al importar ganado americano.

Para aminorar estos miedos, APHIS ha delineado una zona libre de la lengua azul en el noreste de los EE.UU., y los negociantes estadounidenses esperan poder convencer a sus asociados europeos que el ganado de esta zona libre puede cruzar el océano sin el riesgo de transferir la lengua azul.

Para algunos programas de control de plagas de plantas, la regionalización ya es una realidad. King dice que por ejemplo, los especialistas en plagas de plantas de APHIS han trabajado con productores en ciertas municipalidades en el estado de Sonora, en México, para establecer zonas reconocidas como libres de moscas exóticas de la fruta que danan las cosechas agrícolas. Como resultado, APHIS está permitiendo que estas municipalidades exporten manzanas, toronjas, naranjas, y duraznos a los mercados de los EE.UU. Las restricciones en las importaciones de fruta de fuera de una zona libre de plaga continuará hasta que México pueda delinear zonas adicionales que han sido declaradas libres de moscas exóticas de la fruta.



